

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. IV.

BOSTON, MAY, 1896.

No. 12

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

CED. H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 141 FRANKLIN ST., BOSTON.

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The glory of each golden hour
Ne'er quenched the light of prayer;
We lingered in our blissful bower,
But made thee welcome there.

Oh, gladsome days for us have been,
And days of gloom and care,
And days of peace and days of sin;
But all were days of prayer.

Lord, shall not all our days in store
Thus sweetly linked be?
Shall not each morning heavenward soar,
Each evening sing to thee?

Oh, yes! the bond of thy dear praise
Shall ne'er for us be riven:
'Twill stretch through all these mortal days,
All those bright years of heaven!

O song sublime of seraphim,
Linked unto lisped lays!
O sweet, undying, deepening hymn!
O golden chain of praise!

—T. H. Gill.

THE GOLDEN CHAIN OF PRAISE.

*"Every day will I bless Thee; and I will
praise thy name forever and ever."*

O days that low'r, O days that beam,
How may ye linked be?
How from this jarring life may stream
One clear, full harmony?

Those years alone together cleave,
Linked, Lord, by thy dear praise;
Where every morn, where every eve,
Its voice doth heavenward raise.

Thrice blest those lips, thy praise to frame
Whose earliest utterance strove;
They stammered forth thine awful name,
They lisped thy dear love.

Our sports were sweet, but ne'er forbade
The morning prayer to rise;
We did our tasks, nor left unpaid
The evening sacrifice.

Our eager youth for glory burned,
Yet dear we held thy grace;
Toward thy bright creatures, Lord, we yearned,
Yet still we sought thy face.

PRAYER THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"The communion of the Holy Spirit."—2 COR.
xiii. 14.

There are certain unspiritual conceptions of the doctrine of Providence which, in the language of the book of Job, serve to restrain prayer before God. If the Almighty Spirit worketh in all things, and worketh for good, the necessity for supplication is thought to be superseded; for, by the supposition, the infinite tenderness is already wakeful over us, the infinite wisdom arranging the influences that mould us, a Power Almighty executing the purposes of a will all-wise. And there is a physical and external sense in relation to things not affected by the volitions of human spirits, in which it may be admitted that supplication is superseded. But we may have the most intense desire to enter into communion with

the Holy Spirit when we ask nothing but to know him; and there is no region of God's action, external or internal, in which fellowship with him is superseded, in which personal intercourse and the conscious presence, not of his gifts, but of himself, ceases to be the life and nutriment of our souls. The argument reduced to its simplest form amounts to this: since God, of his own infinite power and goodness, is willing to do everything that is right for us, there is no reason why we should personally know him. It is the argument of men who seek God not for the fellowship with himself to which he admits us, the communion of his own nature, but for what he has to give; who regard religion only as a means to certain desired ends, and who forget or know not that religion and the frame of prayer are not means only, but themselves the highest ends of our being; that a spirit in permanent, personal intercourse with God is the perfection and the blessedness of our nature. To reason against the necessity of continual personal approach to God on the grounds that God needs no urging, and is forever acting for us, is simply to obliterate our souls,—that one part of us which only a knowledge of God can fill,—in the wide circle of his blessings to discern and enjoy everything but the living fountain of it all, and to be content to be atheists if only God would give us all we could desire without asking. Imagine any one reasoning in a like way in regard to that first of human blessings,—a pure, high, strong, clear, and noble nature with which to hold intercourse, and have it daily penetrating deeper and deeper into us. Suppose that we had access to one in converse with whom we invariably experienced that our horizon insensibly widened, that all minor disturbances, all the troubled atmosphere of our circumstantial life, fell away from us as absolutely as if we had suddenly been lifted to mountain heights where nothing acts on soul or sense that is not fresh from God; would any one say of such friend: "I know his capacity, and I know his willingness. I know the true eye with which he looks into the heart of things,—that the touch of his nature removes my infirmities, restores strength and clearness to my spirit. Therefore, I need not seek his sympathy for I am already assured of it. I need not bring my feeble

heart into the presence of his strong nature,—he cannot be more my friend than he is." And the case is not altered when God is the spirit with whom men tell us that they need seek no personal communion, because his love and power are always theirs. Nay, all the reasons for seeking him are indefinitely increased, because it is only a spirit that lies in wait for God that obtains a lengthened audience. All souls does he move and touch, seeking entrance; but only with the soul that solicits him does he abide. The soul that would consciously know the full presence of the Holy Spirit must wait long in contemplation before God can come to his temple, and find there nothing to exclude him.

Again, the doctrine of Providence is confounded with destiny; and it is reasoned, Why pray, except so far as work and toil are prayer, since everything is in God's hands, and we cannot alter the course of things? Work and toil are daily fashioning anew the conditions and relations of our life; and abstinence from work and toil is altering them still more, or always for the worse. The aspect, the meaning, the value, the power of everything, is altered for us as we alter; and we alter for the better mainly as God unfolds within us, and gives the direction to our aims. Toil and labor do change everything to which man stands related, internal or external; and what guides that labor to true ends, and what sustains it in dark seasons, but our spirits' intercourse with the Revealer, the Suggester, the Inspirer of all good,—and who, if we will be fellow-workers with him, will accomplish for us all the good his Spirit counsels? Destiny, in the heathen conception of it, may be considered as holding an unalterable course, regardless of the human tools whom it uses for its purpose and then casts aside; but Providence, in the Christian conception of it, is considered as having no purposes but for the sake of the human agents, each individual of whom is made only that he might know God and grow in his image. And therefore is it that God works so slowly on this earth, as men count slowness, because he has to work through the willing souls of free beings. And, in truth, every man has more evidence of God's connections with his own individual heart than he can have of what is called his general Provi-

dence. The one is a matter of argument and influence, the other of direct experience. No man can grasp the question of a universal Providence or speak with express knowledge about it: it is a doctrine of faith; but every man may know how God has been dealing with his own heart and with his own life, what promptings he has given us, what lessons he has been teaching us, how closely a retributive Spirit of Love and Righteousness has kept to us, what blessed consequences have flowed from simple truthfulness of mind, from simple faithfulness of act, and what various and intricate miseries have followed the forfeiture of any pure light which God had opened to the inward eye and commended as a guide to our way. That the whole universe is held within God's Providence we believe, but that our own hearts are in his keeping we know. We know it in every breathing of aspiration, we know it in every sting of conscience, and we believe the first mainly because we know the last.

And if prayer, in the essence of it, is a waiting upon God, that he may manifest himself to us, and a taking advantage of all those moments of more vivid spiritual consciousness when we feel him near to us, that we may present our souls to his action, then we may understand how "to pray without ceasing," or "the communion of the Holy Spirit," becomes possible to man. If it is the tendency of all philosophy to ascend higher and higher toward a simple Unity of Being until it reaches one First Cause, it is equally the tendency of piety to witness no movement of the universe without coming into conscious relations with its God. And he who attains to the discernment of that Unity of Cause which is the ultimate step in philosophy should, of all men, be the least capable of neglecting that communion of spirit which is prayer. Other men reason about God from his works. He does more: he meets him in his works; for he knows that laws are not powers, but only modes of the action of God. Other men stand on the earth, and look wistfully into heaven, and say, "Lord, how long?" To him God is on the earth, and he finds him there; or, if he finds him not, he knows that it is through a blindness in himself. Other men acknowledge the interference of his hand in signal judgments, in sudden, unlooked-for blessings;

he, in every seasonal movement of faithful nature. Other men are awake to God in the irregularities and exceptional experiences; he, in the regularities and constant ways of life. His piety is not of that half-superstitious, half-irreligious, and wholly self-seeking kind which looks for particular providences, referring the ordinary course of things to profaner powers, and reserving only the extraordinary for God; for to him everything is particular, and everything is providence. And fanaticism would assail him in vain with a sign from heaven; for to him everything is a sign from heaven, and he seeks but to read it rightly,—to read it, that is, through communion of spirit with the God who is in it. They who believe in occasional interferences of God have burning moments of self-regarding excitement out of all just proportion to their habitual feeling, and destructive of the healthy tone of natural piety; whilst they to whom every place is holy ground, and all events full of God, are fanatical nowhere, are devotional everywhere. The error of those who rest on particular providences is not that they perceive God in the special circumstances which to them seem so marked and exceptional, but that they perceive him there only, as if, absent or latent at other seasons, there specially he has come forth into relief for the unusual purpose of speaking to them. It is true that there God has found them out, and spoken a searching word to them. It is not true that he has not been seeking them everywhere else, and with words for them as deep and rich, though haply with a different lesson.

"The communion of the Holy Spirit" implies an experience of God's personal influences; and, to a discerning heart, what is there in all the experiences even of our external life that is not a divine influence and action, and a lesson of God upon the soul of man, a seeking of us that he may find us? Whither can we go from his presence? Whither can we flee from his Spirit? And what is communion of spirit but the heart ever conscious to him, and the longing desire of prayer through personal fellowship so to enter into his purposes and understand the ways of his love that with the trust and insight of children we may yield ourselves to every whisper of his will?—*J. H. Thom.*

THE STILL HOUR.

"HE WHO ASKS, RECEIVES."

"Allah, Allah!" cried the sick man, racked with pain the long night through,
Till with prayer his heart was tender, till his lips like honey grew.

But at morning came the Tempter; said, "Call louder, child of pain!
See if Allah ever hear, or answer, 'Here am I,' again."

Like a stab, the cruel cavi! through his brain and pulses went;
To his heart an icy coldness, to his brain a darkness, sent.

Then before him stands Elias; says, "My child, why thus dismayed?
Dost repent thy former fervor? Is thy soul of prayer afraid?"

'Ah!' he cried: 'I've called so often; never heard the 'Here am I';
And I thought God will not pity, will not turn on me his eye."

Then the grave Elias answered, "God said, 'Rise, Elias, go,—
Speak to him, the sorely tempted; lift him from his gulf of woe.

"Tell him that his very longing is itself an answering cry;
That his prayer, "Come, gracious Allah" is my answer, "Here am I!"

"Every inmost aspiration is God's angel undefiled;
And in every 'O my Father!' slumbers deep a 'Here, my child!'"

—James Freeman Clarke. Translation through the German of Tholuck from the Persian.

In piety and prayer we ought to begin at the beginning. It is a curious fact that the Church has often taught that men must begin at the end. Eminent theologians have said that one must not pray at all until converted and regenerate. Some unregenerate persons prayed to Christ when he was in the world, and he answered their prayer. The Roman centurion who worshipped Jupiter and Mars, the woman of Phenicia,—these prayed to Jesus, and he helped them. Many persons are taught to believe that they cannot pray aright until they are miraculously transformed and renewed. But Paul says, "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." Natural

prayer must precede spiritual. Begin by seeing God in nature, in providence, in life; begin by saying, "God help me"; "I thank thee, O Father"; "God forgive me." So a habit of prayer is formed, growing purer, loftier, more constant, more prevailing, more spiritual. It will be pervaded with the spirit of brotherhood and charity. God asks no service of us that he is not ready to help us to perform. He asks nothing but what it is good for us to do. And our first duty, under the gospel of Christ, is not to be afraid of God. The power of the gospel consists in enabling us to say, Abba, Father. When it has taught us to say that, it has done its work. It has then converted us, and made us like little children; and so we can see the kingdom of heaven.—James Freeman Clarke.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

"JESUS AND THE SYRO-PHENICIAN WOMAN."

Matthew xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30.

We come now to one of the stories about Jesus which has puzzled students of the New Testament, because it does not seem quite consistent with the gentle and generous spirit usually shown by him. Observe how much the difficulty is increased by taking the anecdote as a detached morsel, and how much light is thrown on the situation when we lead up to it gradually, having carefully followed the previous history.

Jesus had withdrawn into the wilderness at Bethsaida-Julias, hoping to seclude himself until the excitement about the death of John the Baptist should have passed by. This proved impossible. He was followed by multitudes, and by some who would have made him a king by force. He was obliged to retreat at once from the dangerous vicinity of Herod Antipas; and, after the brief stay and Sabbath preaching at Capernaum (John vi.), he made a second effort to obtain the seclusion which alone could bring him even temporary safety.

He "withdrew" into the "borders of Tyre and Sidon," Mark adds. "He entered into a house, and would have no man know it; and he *could not be hid*."

The territory of Tyre and Sidon extended, north of Galilee, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. But it is not prob-

able that Jesus *crossed* the boundary. The story would imply that he remained two or three days. It was just the time of the Passover; and he would have been likely to choose a Jewish house for shelter at any time, but especially at this season. Also the woman "came out from those borders," implying that she entered the Jewish territory, and also that she had some distance to come. Which again implies a stay of several days on the part of Jesus, giving time for a person who lived at some distance to hear of him.

As the woman (at a distance) heard of him, his presence in those regions must have been widely known. Apparently, she did not at first succeed in penetrating to the presence of Jesus himself; for she appealed to the disciples, and annoyed them by her persistent entreaties. They, in turn, came to Jesus, and begged him to send her away.

She was either admitted or forced her way into the house, and threw herself at his feet, addressing him thus: "O Lord, thou son of David! My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

"But he answered her not a word." (Matt. xv. 22, 23.)

Not to answer such an appeal was so different from the usual behavior of Jesus that it seems to have astonished the disciples. They knew, by the incident of the centurion's servant, by the conversation with the woman of Samaria, by the healing of the nobleman's son (and, doubtless, by other events unrecorded), how ready—nay, eager—Jesus usually was to show cordial sympathy to foreigners. Here seemed a strange contrast to his usual course. Instead of an instant cordial response there was a silent pause. What did this mean?

It meant that the situation was different from what it had been before; that the dangers that threatened Jesus involved with his death the destruction of his hopes for his race and for humanity; that he was placed in a fearful dilemma; that even apparently unimportant incidents might involve grave consequences; that *behind* the cry of the woman ("Thou son of David!") he heard the call of the foreign races which she represented, to come forth from Judea and be *their* Messiah. His hope had been that his race—their religion spiritualized

and liberalized—would become the religious teachers of the world. Had that opportunity passed from the Jews? Should he leave them, and seek a mission elsewhere?

This possibility may have been already present to his mind: now it took shape and voice. What had lain silently in the depths of his heart and mind now seemed to speak from without, and say, "Choose!"

It was not the question of healing the child that caused his hesitation. No, it was the response to the foreigner who hailed him as if she were herself a Jew. It was to this appeal, *behind* the actual request, that Jesus answered, speaking, no doubt, more to himself than to her.

"It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs."*

We can understand this answer if we reflect how terrible must have been the struggle in the mind of Jesus. He could not give up his nation. He seems to have thought, "*That is my mission: while there is one ray of hope, I cannot give it up!*"

But from this conflict the voice of the poor, frantic mother recalled him; and we may venture to think that, had there been any harshness in his tone or manner, she would hardly have dared to answer as she did. "Yes, Lord," she eagerly replied (not in response to *his* thought,—which she could not be expected to grasp,—but her own),—"Yes, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

Then Jesus, setting aside for the minute his own sad thoughts and deep questions, responded instantly and tenderly (with the same touch of emotion and sympathy shown in the story of the centurion):—

"O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt.

"And her daughter was healed from that hour." (Matt. xv. 28.)

Mark says: "And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way: the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the devil gone out."

L. F. C.

*The word used here means "little dogs," or "house-dogs"; that is, the dogs who were allowed to live in the house, and fed by those who sat at table. The Jews, it is true, called all heathen nations "dogs," but there is a distinction between house-dogs and street-dogs.

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Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the

Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

The Book Club secretary ventures to suggest that, if all those who are able to pay postage on the books for which they ask would do so, they would probably themselves receive more books, without mentioning the advantage to others unable to pay postage.

Current numbers of the *Christian Register* and the *Outlook*,—any one who can send either of these regularly, every week, will confer a favor by writing for an address to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Would any one be kind enough to send me reading matter, histories, magazines, or religious reading? I would be specially glad to have a book for my little girl, who is a mute. I cannot talk to her except by signs. I do not know where to get books to teach her, but hope some one will be kind enough to furnish me. I am very poor, and shall be glad to have good reading of any kind. Address Mrs. E. H. Allen, Seymour, Jackson County, Georgia.

Mrs. I. N. Frey, Olympia, Washington, would like "any kind of history of the French Revolution, in paper or otherwise, and a history of France, from the flight of Louis Philippe onward.

I have kept three families supplied with reading matter during the past year, and have just heard of a young lady who likes to read, but cannot get anything to read. I am so far away that I know I often fail to get books, because of the time it takes for a letter to go so far. Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney's books, E. P. Roe's books, "Bricks without Straw," "A Fool's Errand," by Tourgee, "Mill on the Floss," and others by good authors, would be much enjoyed by the girls. If I could get Irving's History of New York, or any of Bulwer Lytton's books, I think I could get some of the boys interested. A young man living with us would like Goodrich's History of the United States. Since I have learned something of the work through the *Letter*, have loaned my own books as well as those I have received. We are thirty miles from the nearest city, and but very few of the people here can afford to buy reading mat-

ter. Mrs. H. I. Hinckley, Edwall, Washington.

Mrs. M. A. Reese, Wayside, Alabama, would be glad to receive old *Youth's Companions* and *St. Nicholas*, for her children.

Mrs. Martha Geisey, Olympia, Washington, would like *Every Other Sunday* and *Dumb Animals*.

Mr. William M. Rogers, Craytonia Post-office, Fannin County, Georgia, asks for a copy of the unabridged edition of "Robert Burns's Complete Works."

Miss Christie Gabrielson, Minneapolis, Kansas, wishes to thank all who have so kindly remembered her with books and other reading. She will be very grateful for a small dictionary, "Gold Elsie," and "Nellie's Memoirs."

I wish to thank some kind member of the Cheerful Letter Club who has been sending me magazines.

I have "Robert Elsmere," "Ships that pass in the Night," and several of Dickens's novels which I would like to exchange for "Middlemarch" or "Pendennis," "Three Men in a Boat," or any of George Eliot's books. I have been reading *The Cheerful Letter* for nearly a year, and like it very much. I am more than thirty miles from any library, and am too poor to buy books. Fannie W. Graves, Danton, Virginia.

Mrs. J. J. Hardin, Pattonsburg, Missouri, asks for standard magazines and *Ladies' Journals*.

Will some one please send me "Ben-Hur" and other reading matter? Will appreciate any kind, as I live in a secluded place, almost entirely cut off from society. Reading is the only pastime I have. Address Mrs. Evalée Meek, Linwood, Indian Territory.

Miss Carrie C. Munson, West Andover, Ohio, asks for an illustrated book on sea shells and sea mosses, also a Latin dictionary.

"Lord, for to-morrow and its needs I do not pray:
Hold me, guide me, teach me, Lord, just for to-day."

This verse was sent me by a *Cheerful Letter* friend, thinking it would help me when

I was tired and overburdened. I will pass it on, hoping it may prove as helpful to others as it has to me.

Here is another thought from George MacDonald that is grand and inspiring. He says, "The common transactions of life are the most sacred channels for the spread of the heavenly leaven." Think of this, tired, busy housekeepers. You think your round of household duties commonplace and monotonous; take fresh courage and inspiration from this thought.

I have found so many good thoughts in my books and the many letters I have received, I hardly know which I value the most; but the books are doing others besides myself so much good. My neighbors are all so well pleased with those I have to lend. They think there never was such a nice collection. I have no calls for novels. They all want religious or instructive books. I have given away nearly all the papers and magazines I have received, and try to do all the good I can with everything sent me. Here is a partial list of the books I have in circulation: "The Wide Wide World"; "Life and Times of Jesus"; Drummond's "Addresses"; "Gates Ajar"; "Our Homes"; "The Schönberg-Cotta Family"; "Saxe Holm's Stories"; "Studies for Stories"; "Thomas Wingfold"; "Looking toward Sunset"; "Titus"; "Graham and I"; a few children's books and several books of sermons. Have I not a grand collection? I also have "Ben-Hur," but was a little disappointed in it, and do not know whether to offer it to others or not. I think there is too much romance, and not enough Christ in it. Will some one tell me what they think of it? I would like to have E. S. Phelps's book, "A Singular Life," and some of Helen H. Jackson's, "Pansy's," and L. M. Alcott's.

Thanking you all for kindness received, I am a sincere friend of *The Cheerful Letter*. Mrs. Carrie Smith, East Peru, Iowa.

Youth's Companion for 1894 and 1895 is asked for by Mrs. W. A. Stafford, Pine Grove, Texas; C. C. Wright, Straw, North Carolina; Mattie Alger, Isabel, Lane County, Oregon.

Mrs. Mary Worley, Bowie, Texas, asks for reading for herself and children, six boys and three girls.

Mrs. Emma L. Orr, Custer City, South

Dakota, asks for easy books on geology for her two boys, who are anxious to know something of the formation of the rocks of the Black Hills.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

I.

Not many — from yonder town
Two — are, worthy of their renown:
From them, as off into — you look,
The view unfolds as the leaves of a book.
For a souvenir I brought from there
A flower, low-poised on its —, and rare.
(Five letters.)

E. P. P.

II.

Are you watching that boat in the waning
light,
As it — to the left, and now to the right?
Light winds — to sweep her beyond the
bank;
But fierce gales would — her, plank from
plank.
Her orders come from the — on shore:
I would I could tell you in — still more.
(Five letters.)

E. P. P.

Here are fashion — without number,
With gowns in — or plain,
From — summer-sky tints
To those of autumn wane.
With "loves of bonnets" in plenty
(O'er — golden or black),
Of ribbons, laces, and feathers,
And buckles and jet without lack.
With colors as softly shaded
In garments, flesh-tints, and all,
And even the trees in the background,
As the — there on the wall.
But, turning from these to my garden,
With its wealth of roses aglow,
With sparkling dew on their —,
The white ones like riven snow,
I marvel, nature's beauties
Free to our sisterhood,
That dress, with its complications,
Seems often the — good.

(Six letters.)

E. P. P.

My first is found in pairs,
My second a solace to the single,
And, if my first it shares,
Their cheery sounds they mingle.
My whole makes merriment and fun,
And tears and grief it will have none.

In two years or more from now why will
a certain English earl be like the New York
Yacht Club?

E. W. H.

THE MIRACLE.

One day in the spring the boy Solomon sat under the palms in his father's garden, and gazed before him in deep thought.

Then came to him Nathan, his teacher, and said, "What dost thou meditate so earnestly under the palms?"

The boy raised his head, and answered, "Nathan, I wish much to see a miracle."

The teacher smiled, and said, "A wish that I also had in my youth."

"And was it gratified?" said the king's son, eagerly.

"A prophet," continued Nathan, "came to me, bearing a pomegranate seed. 'See,' said he, 'what will come forth from this seed.' Then he made a hole in the ground with his finger, and laid the seed therein, and covered it. Hardly had he drawn back his hand than the earth began to open, and I saw the little leaves spring up. But scarcely had I seen them than the leaves separated, and a round stem, enclosed in a sheath, appeared; and the stem grew every moment thicker and higher. Thereupon the man of God said to me, 'Behold!' And immediately I saw seven branches springing from the stem, like the seven arms of the candlestick before the altar. I was astonished; but the prophet beckoned to me, and commanded me to be silent and watch. 'See,' said he, 'a new creation will be soon begun.' Then he took water in the hollow of his hand, from the brook which ran near by, and sprinkled three times the branches; and, lo! the branches became full of green leaves, so that a cooling shade spread over us, exhaling a delicious perfume. 'Whence,' cried I, 'came this fragrance and the refreshing shade?' 'Dost thou not see,' replied the prophet, 'the purple blossoms shoot forth from the green leaves and hang in clusters?'"

"I would have spoken, but a soft wind swept the leaves and strewed them here and there, like the snow falling gently from the clouds. Hardly had the leaves fallen than between the leaves hung the red pomegranate, like the almonds from the rod of Aaron. Then left me the man of God, in deep amazement."

Here Nathan ceased speaking. Then quickly asked Solomon: "Where is he? How call they the name of this wonderful man? Lives he yet?"

Then answered Nathan, "My son, I have told to thee a vision."

As Solomon heard this, he was troubled in heart, and said, "Why hast thou thus deceived me?"

But Nathan answered: "I have not deceived thee, my son. Behold, in thy father's garden thou mayst see all this miracle I have described. Behold it now upon this pomegranate, and every other tree the same."

"Yes," said Solomon, "but unnoticed and in a longer time."

Then answered Nathan, "Is it therefore less a miracle because it takes place in silence and unnoticed? I think it is so much more divine. Know first Nature. Speak often of her and of her works. Then wilt thou easily believe in a power higher than the cunning skill of man."—*Selected by E. R.*

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

We have ended our third year. Now shall we make the fourth more useful and successful than the last?

We want some short articles for our "Mothers' Council." Will not some of our readers send us one now and then? Here is a good subject: "How shall we teach Young Children to be Truthful?"

We should like to take up the "History Class" again. Will any one who would especially be interested in this let us know?

We hope those of our readers who are also givers of books know what excellent books may be procured now, in Boston, at very low prices. At De Wolfe & Fiske's all of Juliana Ewing's unrivalled stories for the young are sold for twenty-five cents a volume. At the same place, and at Zinn's, R. H. White's, Jordan & Marsh's, Houghton & Dutton's, some excellent books in paper covers can be obtained for five and ten cents. And at all these places we have often found the novels of Scott, Dickens, and other standard authors, bound and in good print, for fifteen or twenty-five cents a volume.

There were so many requests for the books offered in April by the editor that she has not been able to meet them all. "The House of the Seven Gables" proved

especially popular; and, if others would either offer it themselves, or send to the editor for an address, she would be grateful.

The editor would also kindly request readers of the paper to notice that she is not able to undertake correspondence with shut-ins or others. She frequently receives letters requesting answers, but it is out of her power to respond. Requests for reading should all go to the "Book Club." Ask the editor *only* for books offered by her.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be no meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange in June. Notice of the next meeting will be given in *The Cheerful Letter*.

Mrs. John Morgan, Lacombe, Alberta, Canada, is to leave her present residence in May, and requests that nothing more shall be sent her until she gives us her new address.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

Our Book Club department has grown so large that we shall ask of all who in the future write to us for books to send the name of some minister as a reference,—when possible, the minister of the church to which they belong.

We fear that some of our subscribers have the impression that by subscribing for *The Cheerful Letter* they will be sure to receive books. The Book Club has proved an at-

tractive department of our paper; and many of our subscribers are interested in sending books to those who are unable otherwise to obtain them. But we engage only to keep the Book Club open for offers and requests, and that under certain conditions.

We remind all who send parcels or boxes with books, papers, etc., to correspondents or to libraries, that it is absolutely necessary to write at the same time to the receiver, enclosing the receipt which shows that the express or freight charges on the package have been paid. For want of this precaution, valuable packages have never been received. It is not probable that any of our *Cheerful Letter* friends send packages without prepaying them, but it is a common mistake of the express agents to charge the receiver for a prepaid package.

N.B.—PLEASE READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING FOR BOOKS.

The address of Eva Robertson, Dyersburg, Tennessee, will be changed about May 20, to Osceola, Arkansas.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Nichols; and to Miss Clarke only articles for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.